



# **Louisville Metro Tree Advisory Commission**

**January 22, 2013**

**5:00 PM**

**Air Pollution Control District Boardroom**

**Meeting Minutes**

## **I. Welcome and Announcements**

Commission Co-chair Katy Schneider welcomed Louisville Metro Tree Advisory Commission (hereinafter, "Commission" or "LMTAC") members and guests. The following Commissioners were present: Katy Schneider (Co-Chair), Paul Capiello, Shane Corbin, Stephen Cotton, Meseude Duyar, Robert Eberenz, Todd Eberle, Scott Hannah, Maria Koetter, Michelle King, Sherie Long, Monica Orr, John Potter, and Mark White.

Katy encouraged everyone to sign in and asked everyone present to introduce themselves.

Ex-officio Commissioner Michelle King announced there was an email sign-up sheet for people who wanted to get emails from LMTAC.

## **II. Approval of Minutes**

Katy solicited a motion for approval of minutes. Scott Hannah motioned for approval, Todd Eberle seconded, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

## **III. Old Business**

### **a. 2013 Kentucky Tree Board Seminar and Reception**

Katy announced the upcoming Tree Board Seminar on February 22 at the Clifton Center and encouraged the commissioners to attend. Monica Orr passed out Tree Board Seminar agendas and registration forms. (Attachment A) Katy also announced a wine and cheese reception for speakers, attendees, and other interested tree enthusiasts being held the evening of February 21 at Whitehall. (Attachment B)

### **b. Informational Conference Call with Plan-it GEO, LLC**

Katy announced that a conference call with Plan-It GEO, LLC, was planned for Monday, January 28<sup>th</sup>. Plan-it GEO is a consulting and planning firm that specializes in natural resource management, including urban tree canopy (UTC) analysis. This call is to provide information for those working on the preparation of an RFP for the city's (UTC) assessment. A similar informational meeting was previously held with Davey Tree Institute. Katy welcomed the Commission to attend the upcoming conference call with Plan-It GEO.

#### **c. Non-profit Organization Status**

Katy explained that it has been much more complicated than thought to establish a 501(c)(3) non-profit. LMTAC has been working to establish a tree fund account within an existing non-profit. Katy expressed reservations about LMTAC founding a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation itself, saying it would be awkward. She said that discussions were ongoing with the Center for Neighborhoods and that hopefully there would at least be a LMTAC bank account within the month.

### **IV. Committee End of Year Reports**

#### **a. Community Outreach & Education**

Commissioner and Community Outreach & Education Committee co-chair Monica Orr said the committee had put together a PowerPoint slideshow with a version that focuses on the benefits of trees and another that includes more information on the current urgency of LMTAC's work toward increasing Louisville's UTC. She said the committee has also started forming partnerships with a local school that has an environmental science program. They planted five of the trees donated by EcoTech at the school. Monica said that there would later be an adult education component, but that it was important to start with the students. She also said the committee is working with Louisville Nature Center, Assumption High School, Moore High School, Moore Middle School and others, and that they hope to have additional response in 2013.

Katy said this is an example of where a non-profit and the Commission would need to clearly delineate their roles. Education and outreach, she said, would be a better fit for a non-profit, because it is difficult for a volunteer government body such as LMTAC to do community outreach and education. She highlighted the need to figure out what structures are needed to accomplish that goal. Monica added that the commission needs to articulate its outreach and education mission more clearly as the committee's work progresses. A written report from Monica is attached. (Attachment C)

#### **b. Policy Committee**

Katy summarized the Policy Committee's work in making recommended revisions to the Louisville Development Code (LDC). The committee has proposed doing away with tree waivers, which Katy said were never necessary in the first place due to alternative methods of compliance where onsite canopy requirements could not be met. The committee has also tried to make the LDC easier to follow and to reinforce LMTAC's no-net-tree-canopy-loss policy recommendations.

Commissioner Shane Corbin asked what "no waiver" meant: was it no felling of existing trees?

Ex-officio Commissioner Sherie Long explained that there were three ways to meet the LDC's tree requirements: 1) preserve or plant trees on site, 2) plant new trees off-site, or 3) plant new trees on-site at the Planning Commission's approval. This last provision has been used in many cases by paying a set amount per tree to be planted to Metro Parks. She said that the new recommendations would preserve these three options, but that for off-site trees, the committee is recommending the

creation of a Louisville Metro Government tree fund that people could pay into rather than planting actual trees. These funds would be used by Metro Government to plant and maintain trees in accordance with the priorities set by the UTC assessment and LMTAC recommendations. In the past, she said there had been a lot of waivers for tree canopy relief. Why should anyone be granted these waivers, she asked, if they can pay into a fund and plant trees off-site?

Katy said LMTAC was still waiting for Louisville Metro Planning & Design Director Phil Bills to give an example of a case where a tree waiver would be necessary (Phil had given a presentation to LMTAC at the December 2012 meeting). Katy said it was clear that the staff of the Planning Commission were not familiar with the alternatives for complying with LDC tree canopy requirements.

Commissioner Robert Eberenz asked if Phil didn't bring examples of tree waiver necessities. Sherie replied that Phil brought an example of a landscaping waiver, not a tree waiver. Commissioner Scott Hannah added that tree waivers didn't happen that often. Katy said they shouldn't be a big deal. Scott agreed.

Katy said there should be a comprehensive tree ordinance, but that LMTAC, as a volunteer body, just didn't have the time or expertise to draft one. Instead, she said that the Commission could, consistent with its role as an advisory commission, recommend to the mayor that he hire someone or task someone to research and write a comprehensive tree ordinance.

Scott noted that any recommendations would have to be approved by Metro Council and that simple grammatical changes to the LDC have previously taken several months to be approved.

### **c. Projects & Maintenance**

Projects & Maintenance Committee co-chair Mike Hayman said the committee did several projects in 2012, which he thought was pretty good for not having a budget. He noted that he had many partners in these projects and that EcoTech's donation accounted for ½ of the trees that were planted in 2012. Mike highlighted that in some cases EcoTech trees led to neighborhoods planting even more trees. For example: the city of Wellington got 10 free trees and is going to add its own; Avondale hasn't gotten its EcoTech trees yet, but they have a 100-tree goal.

Mike also highlighted conversations he'd taken part in about improving tree wells downtown. He said the tree wells needed better soil in order in order to support trees.

Mike also pointed to conversations with Jefferson County Public Schools aimed at planting more trees on school campus and reducing the attrition rate of planted trees. Mike said regeneration was also important.

Finally, Mike wondered about the possibility of letting highways grow trees instead of mowing them, which, he noted, would cost nothing.

Going forward, Mike said, schools and the highway department will be places the committee can work with.

Mike listed examples of trees installed in 2012. This list is included in Mike's written report. (Attachment D).

Re-Tree Dundee planted 43-trees by themselves, a process that Mike facilitated.

Mike said that the Kentucky Center for African-American Heritage had no trees until they did a ceremonial tree planting during the 2012 Festival of Faiths. Now, they're going to plant 43 trees and branch out to the neighborhood. He noted that Brown-Forman has committed another 24 trees to Brightside.

The most important element of any tree project, Mike said, is the people who live in the neighborhood, and he noted a resident of Shively who was attending the meeting and interested in initiating a tree planting project.

Robert Eberenz noted that Lake Forest has a lot of ash trees, but the neighborhood has decided to let them all die. In contrast, he pointed to a nearby neighborhood that has been treating its trees with success.

Mike asked LMTAC to consider spending up to \$1,000 of funds donated by Christy Lee Brown to buy small trees for \$25 or \$30. He said it could become a model for lower-income neighborhoods where people can't afford to pay \$250 for a tree. The smaller trees also do not compete with local nurseries, he noted. The Projects & Maintenance Committee could get a bundle of them and see how it works. The bundles are \$250 each. Mike appealed for a quick decision, since the next two months will be prime planting months and by April it will be too late for planting.

Monica Orr asked what kind of trees would be in the bundles. Mike answered they would be the biggest trees that would fit on the site. Shane Corbin asked how Mike would decide where to plant them. Mike answered that he had talked or would talk to someone in each neighborhood. Shane asked if they would be planted in lawns or right-of-ways. Mike noted that they would be planted where space is available and that he works with City Arborist and Ex-Officio Commissioner Mark White when plantings will be in public right-of-ways. Commissioner Todd Eberle asked whether they would be bare-root trees. Mike answered yes. Todd noted that in the past Prospect had purchased trees in containers, complete with large root balls, for \$15 each from Frank Otte Nursery for an Arbor Day celebration.

Commissioner and Projects and Maintenance Committee co-chair Paul Capiello discussed the differences between planting a small bare-root tree versus a large "ball and burlap" tree. He suggested that the bare-root project could be considered as research that could lead to two different kinds of tree-planting projects in the future. Different neighborhoods have different needs, he said, but this would be a good pilot project.

Mike said we could maybe do a few hundred trees a year if this works.

Commissioner Stephen Cotton asked if Mike had a map with the tree plantings on it. Mike said no, but that Commissioner Maria Koetter would have the addresses. Katy noted that other cities use tree-tracking software.

Mike said this year he'd like to focus more on the Portland and Shawnee neighborhoods, as well as Southwest Louisville. In lower-income neighborhoods it can take longer to identify tree-champions, he said.

Katy said she didn't think Christy Brown would have a problem with money being used for this purpose. Katy asked if Paul, as the Projects & Maintenance committee co-chair would motion for this. Paul so motioned. Katy called for a vote. The vote was a unanimous yes.

#### **d. Scientific & Inventory Committee**

Commissioner and Scientific & Inventory Committee co-chair Shane Corbin passed out summaries of his committee report. He said the committee was given a big task. It was difficult to figure out what data they needed, he said, as well as what data was already available. The committee gave attention to the EAB problem, as well as developing an RFP. They looked at a Tree Master Plan developed by the University of Louisville and the work of committee co-chair and University of Louisville professor Margaret Carreiro. They met with officials from the Louisville Jefferson County Information Consortium (LOJIC) and the Davey Tree Institute. Right now, he said, the committee is developing an RFP for a UTC Master Plan. Shane said it had been challenging to do so because of the technical nature of the RFP. Shane said to give an immediate response to the impending EAB crisis, there needs to be an inventory of public right-of-way ash trees. The committee is proposing that this inventory be done by college interns. Katy Schneider asked if this would just be inside of the urban services district. Shane said they hadn't had that discussion yet. Shane said this information would feed into the city's EAB response plan. A comprehensive inventory, he said, will need to go into UTC Master Plan.

Shane said the objectives of the Master Plan would be to determine what Louisville's tree canopy was 10, 20, and 30 years ago. The plan would look at repeat flooding events, the urban heat island, and other relevant occurrences. The Master Plan will also try to figure out how many trees the city would have to plant in order to get to achieve a 45 percent tree canopy within a certain number of years, given current projected rates of tree loss. This inventory would be goals-based. Shane's written report is attached. (Attachment E)

Katy said it'd be nice to afford a whole inventory. Indianapolis is doing that right now and it's \$450,000 through Davey Tree Institute.

#### **V. Other Business**

Katy Schneider asked if there were any other questions or announcements. Todd Eberle put in a good word for the upcoming Tree Board Seminar and encouraged other Commissioners to attend.

Katy said the Commission would have to tell the Mayor that, going forward, if he wants the Commission to proceed, he will have to allocate more resources.

Ex-officio Commissioner Mesude Duyar said she is applying for Tree City USA re-certification for Louisville and that she's not sure if the city will make it or not. She'd appreciate if everyone forwarded information about trees planted, as well as any money spent on tree planting, maintenance, removal, or education pertaining to tree work. Mike Hayman asked if she could include the EcoTech trees, and Mesude said yes, they're looking primarily for city work, but governmental agencies supporting tree planting is okay. Metro Parks has represented the largest portion of the tree budget shown to Tree City USA, Mesude noted. She added that the city is not up to certification levels yet, based on Brightside and Public Works tree numbers. Various committee members suggested different projects to include in the totals. Katy suggested counting Mike's time. Scott Hannah asked if St. Matthews would be counted separately, and Mesude said yes. She added that the deadline was yesterday.

Todd said they've started doing tree campuses and asked if UofL was one. Several people said it was.

## **VI. Adjourn**

Katy reminded the Commissioners that the next meeting would be 5:00 February 26<sup>th</sup> in the same location and adjourned the meeting at 5:56 PM.